

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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DRAFTED BY ARA/MEX.:JTDREYFUSS:AC

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EGEN MX

SUBJECT: VOLUNTARY MEAT RESTRAINTS

REF: DREYFUSS-AMBASSADOR JOVA TELECON

1.FOLLOWING IS SUBSTANCE OF INFORMATION GIVEN TO AMBASSADOR
DE OLLOQUI BY JOHN DREYFUSS TODAY IN RESPONSE
TO DE OLLOQUI'S PREVIOUS APPROACH ON MEXICAN MEAT RE-
STRAINT LEVEL:

(A) IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EARLY FAVORABLE RESPONSE BE RE-
CEIVED FROM THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT ON THE QUESTION OF THEIR
PARTICIPATION IN A SYSTEM OF VOLUNTARY MEAT RESTRAINTS.
THE U.S. CONGRESS WILL RETURN FROM ITS RECESS ON APRIL 7.
IT WILL SOON THEREAFTER BEGIN CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSAL
TO COMPLETELY BAN ALL MEAT IMPORTS FOR A 90-DAY PERIOD.
THE ADMINISTRATION IS OPPOSED TO THIS PROPOSED LEGISLA-
TION BUT NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO TELL THE CONGRESS THAT WE HAVE
BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN WORKING OUT A PROGRAM TO RESTRAIN OVER-
ALL MEAT IMPORTS.

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(B) I HAVE REVIEWED YOUR REQUEST THAT THE MEXICAN VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT LEVEL BE INCREASED TO THE INITIAL PROPOSAL OF 62.8 MILLION LBS FROM THE PRESENTLY PROPOSED LEVEL OF 58.4 MILLION LBS. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO DO THIS AS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF PERMISSIBLE MEAT IMPORTS HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED ON A MATHEMATICALLY ACCURATE BASIS BASED ON EACH COUNTRY'S BEST ONE YEAR OF EXPORTS OUT OF THE LAST TWO YEARS. UNDER THIS FORMULA, THE SHARE OF LATIN AMERICA INCREASED FROM 20 TO 22 WHICH WAS ABLE TO ALLEVIATE SEVERE PROBLEMS IN SEVERAL CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS, AND COSTA RICA. EVERY OTHER COUNTRY PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM--WITH THE SOLE EXCEPTION OF MEXICO--HAS INDICATED THEIR AGREEMENT TO THIS PROGRAM. HAITI AND PANAMA HAVE ACCEPTED SHARES LOWER THAN ORIGINALLY PROPOSED. SHOULD MEXICO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE THIS COULD FORCE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO DETERMINE THAT ITS EFFORTS TO ENTER INTO VOLUNTARY RESTRAINTS HAD FAILED AND MANDATORY RESTRAINTS COULD BE IMPOSED. ALL MEAT EXPORTING COUNTRIES WOULD BE LOSERS UNDER MANDATORY CONTROLS WHICH WOULD BE AT A LEVEL OF 106 MILLION POUNDS LESS THAN THE LEVEL AUTHORIZED FOR VOLUNTARY CONTROLS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE U.S. WOULD BE REQUIRED TO EXPLAIN THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE IMPOSITION OF QUOTAS.

(C) WE RECOGNIZE THE INTERNAL DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEM THIS CAUSES FOR MEXICO SINCE THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ITS OWN EXPORT RESTRAINT LEVEL BASED ON THE EARLIER FIGURE OF 62.8 MILLION LBS. THE GOM MAY WISH TO CONSIDER REVISING ITS EXPORT TARGET DOWNWARDS TO NEAR OR EVEN BELOW THE PRESENTLY PROPOSED LEVEL. WE CAN HOLD BACK THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE EXACT LEVEL OF THE MEXICAN QUOTA UNDER VOLUNTARY RESTRAINTS FOR A WEEK AND PERHAPS MORE. IT IS ESSENTIAL, HOWEVER, TO HAVE A FIRM ASSURANCE FROM MEXICO NOW THAT THEY WILL ACCEPT THE PROGRAM AT THE LEVEL PROPOSED AND TO CONCLUDE PROMPTLY A BILATERAL AGREEMENT. WE WOULD MOREOVER HAVE TO PROVIDE THE LEVEL TO OUR CONGRESS IF ASKED FOR DETAILS OF OUR PROGRAM. INGERSOLL
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